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ABSTRACT

There are three major kinds of adult education in Nigeria today--traditional adult education, formal adult education, and Islamic adult education. Because it is the form of adult education most promoted by the government, formal adult education is the most dominant approach found in Nigeria. A look at Nigeria's national policy on education indicates that educational leaders in Nigeria view adult and continuing education as a panacea for the present and future ills of Nigeria. To implement adult education throughout the country, policy-makers have formulated a number of approaches. Included among these are (1) adopting mandatory continuing education; (2) adapting individual literacy programs to fit given cultural and sociological conditions; (3) creating national, state, and local inservice programs; (4) developing a National Service Program that is a cross between Vista and military scholarship programs; and (5) establishing national commissions for adult education in each state to coordinate activities. There are, however, a number of barriers to successful implementation of such programs, including corruption, conflicts between traditional Islamic beliefs and western educational practices, existing class structures, and the current totalitarian administration of Nigeria's educational program. (MN)

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The Nature of Adult and Continuing Education in Nigeria[1] With Special Reference to Sokoto

Russell S. Mattimore-Knudson

Nigeria has a long and rich history of educating adults. Far before the advent of Westerners, particularly the British, many tribes or ethnic groups within Nigeria, and there are many, had organized educational programs for educating adults. These were informal systems of education aimed at teaching young adults the necessary skills to perpetuate the cultural and social systems of the tribe. Fafunwa[1], refers to this kind of education as "traditional adult education" where young men and women were taught how to build houses, care for children, and about the political and economic structure of the tribe.

Subsequent to this kind of adult education, which incidentally still exists in a limited way in many tribal villages in Nigeria, came "formal adult education." According to Anyanwu[2], for example, this kind of adult education served the villages in much the same way as traditional adult education with the exception that it took place in classrooms and was based on the whiteman's conception of occupational and vocational education.

Evidently the first school of this sort began in Western Nigeria around 1842 in Badagry and Abeokuto and still exists today. It was started by some christian missionaries and has

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since been the foundation of the kind of adult education that one usually sees in Nigeria today.[3]

It is interesting to note at this juncture that although the expression "mandatory continuing or adult education" is not part of the Nigerian educators language, that once the missionaries ideas of education were accepted, a form of MCE developed. That is, rather than view education of young men and women as primarily a means to perpetuate the folkways and mores of the tribe, they began to view education for adults as a necessity to grapple with the mysterious ideas given to them by the whiteman. This conception pervades the current thinking of Nigerian educators and politicians and has been the stimulus for the Ministry of Education's formal statement about the direction of education in Nigeria in general and about the direction of adult and continuing education in particular. More will be said about this later including the fact that hardly any of the adult and continuing education endeavors in Nigeria are for personal enrichment.

Although it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the pros and cons of MCE in Nigeria, such an investigation would surely give insights into the problems Nigerian educators are experiencing in a nation where dozens of languages are spoken and more than 70 percent of the 80 or so million people are illiterate.[4]

Thus, adult education and continuing education is not as new to Nigeria as some think. Like many countries throughout

the world, adult education has existed in some form or another since the beginning of organized societies. In a formal sense however, it seems clear formal adult education is quite new, relatively speaking, and is not native to the thinking of Nigerians. The formal notion of adult education in Nigeria is of foreign dissent and does not resemble the thinking of pre-Nigerians or tribal man in Nigeria.

There is yet another form of adult education extant in Nigeria today that should be touched upon. This is "islamic adult education." This form of adult education has its beginnings in the teachings of the Koran and is hundreds of years old. It may be classified to some extent as a kind of combination of traditional and formal adult education in the sense that it took place in a formally organized setting much like the present classroom, the methods of teaching were ridgid and based primarily on recitation and rote, and was purposefully designed to perpetuate the cultural, social, political, and economic underpinnings of an islamic way of life. The kinds of programs that were promoted were personal hygeine, blacksmithing, and other trades necessary for survival, including the scriptures of the Koran which were believed to give people a sense of community and prepare them for a heavenly life. In this sense, islamic adult education was traditional. According to Jah[5], this characterizes the way islamic adult education use to be many years ago and essentially the way it is practiced in Nigeria today, particularly in the Northerwestern Nigerian

states, for example, Sokoto, but everywhere in the country where islam is practiced. Jah further states that islamic adult education is practiced according to the Koran at young adulthood and continues to the grave.[6] The teachings to the grave primarily consist of educating the adult continuously in the teachings of the Koran that will prepare them as well as possible for the life hereafter.

Recapitulating at this point, there are three major kinds of adult education presently in use in Nigeria today: some more in use than the other. These are: traditional adult education, formal adult education, and islamic adult education. The remainder of this paper will focus on "formal adult education" because it is most like the way adult education exists in the United States, and is the form of adult education that is mostly promoted by the government. Therefore, it has become the most dominant approach to adult education; an approach that is so prevalent in Nigeria that it would be a mistake not to discuss it in some detail.

Since formal adult education is the dominant approach to adult education in Nigeria and heavily supported by the government, an appropriate place to start this discussion is a discussion of The National Policy on Education[7] which is a compilation of formal statements about the purpose and goals of elementary, secondary, and adult education in Nigeria. This is Nigeria's first attempt to formalize and standardize a national ideology of education across the lifespan and is the result of about

10 years of effort beginning with the inauguration of the National Curriculum Conference in 1969[8], and the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education in 1971.[9]

Although only 2 pages of the National Policy on Education[10] is devoted explicitly to adult and continuing education, there are several references made to life-long education elsewhere in the document. These along with the 2 pages on adult education will be summarized here and discussed in-view of this writers observations while he was travelling in Nigeria and teaching and conducting research on the concept of adult education at the University of Sokoto from 1979 to 1980.

Beginning with Section 1 of the National Policy on Education[11] the consensus among educational leaders in Nigeria today is that education in general and adult and continuing education in particular is a panacea for the present and future ills of Nigeria. They believe educating adults, who they do not define, as well as children, who they also do not define, will build (1) a free and democratic society, (2) a just and egalitarian society, (3) a united, strong and self reliant nation, (4) a great and dynamic economy, and (5) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. They further believe the consequences of the quality of instruction at all levels, from womb to tomb, will generally develop in the peoples of Nigeria (a) a respect for the worth and dignity of individuals, (b) faith in man's ability to make rational decisions, (c) moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relations,

(d) shared responsibility for the common good of society, (e) respect for the dignity of labor, and (f) promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of everyone. This view is not surprising for a developing nation however, and is not unlike the early philosophy of education espoused by John Dewey at the turn of the century, especially in his books My Pedagogic Creed[12], and Democracy and Education.[13]

For the leaders of Nigerian education, education will free the peoples of Nigeria from tribal differences and ignorance and provide the means to unite the country and provide a "land full of opportunities" for everyone, young and old. They visualize this happening when the majority of the youth and adults are literate. Thus, the route to fullfilling the forgoing ideals of these Nigerian educators is a nation wide literacy program to effect everyone regardless of age. According to Onyeajuwa[14], Maiduguri[15], and Ahmed[16], strides in this direction have been made with significant results since the drafting of the National Policy on Education. For example, in Kaduna State 115 literacy programs in 14 local governments have been established and are in the process of being implemented. Several other states have also made similar strides. These are Oyo State where a 3 year course leading to a primary school equivalent for adults has been established in the Agbowo area in connection with the Department of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan; the Plateau State where a Faith and Farm Center has been organized to help farmers become literate

generally and about the use of contemporary Western farming technology; Bauchi State where grants have been provided to support the establishment of the Adult Education Training Institute which conducts classes in functional literacy; and Kano State where thousands of adult Nigerians are being educated in Arabic, Home Economics and Hygiene. This covers only a small part of the 80 or so million people in Nigeria however, and much more needs to be done in all 19 Nigerian States. This is particularly true in Sokoto State, which in comparison with most of the other states, has been relatively neglected by the Federal Government up until Shehu Shargari, a native of Sokoto State, became president of Nigeria in 1979. More will be said about the nature of adult and continuing education and some of the problems establishing programs in Sokoto State shortly, after more is said about the nature of adult and contiuing education in Nigeria generally.

Returning to the National Policy on Education, some specifics about the objectives leaders of Nigerian education have given to formalize "adult and non-formal (continuing) education" throughout Nigeria should be pointed out to give a more precise perspective of the foundations of adult and non-formal education. In Section 7 of the National Policy 5 objectives have been given to guide the creation and development of adult education programs throughout the country. In addition to these, several ways to implement these objectives are given. They are: (1) to provide functional literacy education for adults who

have never had the advantage of any formal education, (2) to provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system, (3) to provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their knowledge and skills, (4) to provide in-service on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills, and (5) to give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.[17]

These objectives are expected to be implemented in a number of ways.[18] One way they perceive to completely eradicate illiteracy over the entire country in 10 years (from 1977) is to governmentally create (and hence regulate) a list of occupations which require literacy in order to perform them. This is a kind of MCE through government intervention which was alluded to earlier. Related to this will be the creation of facilities around the country to ensure every illiterate person has access to a place where functional literacy programs are being taught. This essentially means that in time, assuming this works, no Nigerian adult will beable to gain employment unless he can at least read and write at a particular level for a particular job. Furthermore, these educators see this approach as "encouraging individuals to see literacy as a means of self-improvement."

A second way to implement these objectives is to adapt every literacy program to fit the cultural and sociological conditions in each area of the country. One of the motives for this approach is to unite the many peoples of Nigerai into "one nation" of people actively working together for the general good of the nation of Nigeria--not simply their own ethnic group, e.g., the Ibo's. The hopes here is that by adapting each program to individual ethnic group conditions and ideologies, people will be more receptive to the ideas of government officials in uniting Nigeria for the common good of all. It is important to understand that the purpose here and of all literacy programs in Nigeria, is to develop in all people the same nationalistic attitude so the country can compete on an international scale.

A third way to implement these objectives is to create national, state, and local in-service programs. These, as they are in the United States, will be primarily job related, and governed and regulated by the Industrial Training Fund, the National Commission on Adult and Continuing Education, and employers organizations. Some of these have already been created and are in operation in the Southern States.

According to the originators of the National Policy, much of this will be ineffective unless some system is created to recognize learners for their efforts either in the literacy programs or in the job related in-service programs. Therefore, they have suggested that the experiences people have in these

programs be given some kind of formal credit and that this credit be recognized by administrators of the formal educational systems in Nigeria. One way for doing this is to grant diplomas to those who complete the programs.

A fourth way for implementing these objectives is through something called the National Service Program that was started several years ago at the national level to encourage able young adults to attend the universities. This program was designed to give able students essentially a free university education if they agreed to work for the state and/or federal government for 2 years after they completed their education. This is a cross between Vista and the military scholarship programs, e.g., ROTC in the United States. The National Service Program in adult and continuing education, although essentially the same in structure to the National Service Program for university students, is volunteer however, and educated Nigerians who want to participate, do so without pay. It is clearly a volunteer program in terms of money and time on both the parts of the government and those who want to teach informal adult classes.

Encouraging educated Nigerians to volunteer their time (and money) is not enough to teach millions of Nigerian adults how to read and write and how to perform a skill proficiently, however, even if most of these educated Nigerians are interested in volunteering themselves (which they are not). Some administrative structure has to be created to organize the means envisioned for educating the masses. Therefore, an adult

education organizer system has been created at the state and federal level to work on a regular basis both in the rural and urban areas theoughout Nigeria with the responsibility for organizing and mobilizing literate citizens to help educate fellow Nigerians in their area. To overseer their work another means has been created, a sixth means, to implement the national objectives. This is the establishment of a National Commission for Adult Education in each state to coordinate all adult and continuing education activities.

In addition to these six means four others have been created to implement the national objectives. Some of these are now in operation whereas the others are still in the planning stage. The two that are now in operation are the utilization of existing national institutions such as industrial and commercial training establishments which are used for evening courses, and state and local libraries. Some libraries are now being used, particularly in Bauchi State, but more are being used every month as adult education centers. The two means still in the planning stages or in the process of getting off the ground are the establishment of low cost correspondence education programs at the state and national levels, and sections of state ministries of education to regulate the standards of evening programs and classes. Because adult and contiuning education is not yet well established as part of the state ministries of education, there is not sufficient staff to work on a regular basis, and therefore not enough staff to work as inspectorate

personnel in state adult and continuing education programs. Consequently, regulating the standards of adult and continuing education evening classes and programs has been neglected, but is constantly addressed by the conscientious few.

Based on the National Policy on Education, both its general section on the "Philosophy of Nigerian Education" and the section on "Adult and Non-formal Education" these are the ideals and views, and means to build and achieve a sound national adult and continuing educational system in Nigeria. Some of these ideals have been actualized as noted earlier while others have been neglected or are in the planning stages. Regardless of the problems within Nigeria, Nigerian educators for the most part, continue to work out a viable system so everyone in every ethnic group (there are hundreds) in all the states have an equal chance to become literate and educated. There are definitely problems at the federal level and the state level that need to be dealt with in order for a sound system to appear, for example, favoritism in hiring people from one's own ethnic group to work in the ministries of education and in the schools; and federal, state, and local embezzlements of money by educators that has been earmarked to improve the physical environment of the schools; but these are slowly being handled and worked through. There are the problems of religious beliefs too that are slowly being worked through. All of these problems have been barriers for the conscientious educator who wants to see the Nigerian public as literate and educated as the European.

His fight is not easy for he has to route out superstitions that have been part of the lifestyles of millions of Nigerians for generations. JuJu, for example, is a superstitious belief, similar to the notion of magic, that is part of the thinking of almost every Nigerian including some of those who have been educated in Western universities. These beliefs many times act as barriers to change, and therefore make the conscientious educators job very difficult. This is particularly true in the state of Sokoto, the last of the Nigerian states to open up to Western technologies and education. For hundreds of years, before and since Usuman Dan Fodio's leadership[19], the thinking of the people of Sokoto has been dominated by the teachings of the Koran. These teachings have made it particularly difficult to establish a Western form of education, or establish literacy programs that are not islamic in nature. Consequently, the forgoing objectives of adult and continuing education and the various means to implement these objectives have not been realized to the degree they have in some of the other states. Traditional and islamic adult education are practiced most in Sokoto and therefore little consideration is given to formal adult and continuing education as it is practiced in the United States or in terms of the objectives stated earlier.

Traditional and islamic education is mostly practiced at the elementary and secondary levels as well even though many of the elementary and and secondary schools are publically organized, meaning through the Ministry of Education.

That is, the values and attitudes of the children, regardless of whether they are attending an islamic school or a public non-sectarian school, are intergenerationally islamic and taught at home. This intergenerational teaching at home makes it difficult to establish Western adult and continuing education classes and programs because they are viewed as "unnecessary" or in opposition to the teachings of the Koran by the majority of the population in Sokoto. One has to understand that approximately three-fourths of the population of Sokoto State is muslim, and therefore in order to institute any kind of non-islamic educational program, islamic attitudes and beliefs have to be overcome. This is especially true of the islamic belief in Sokoto that women are inferior to men and therefore should not be educated as well as men. This is not the case in Egypt, for example, where muslims regard women as equals educationally.[20] The brand of islam practiced in Sokoto City and State is not the same as the brand of islam practiced in Egypt or some of the other predominately islamic countries and therefore in dealing with any islamic barriers to a formal system of adult and continuing educational system in Sokoto, one must be examine the particular situation in Sokoto. This means examining the Fulani influence and the cultural evolution of the area. Without knowledge of this it is doubtful much could be done in the way of establishing a formal adult and continuing educational system.

Another barrier to creating and establishing formal

adult and continuing education programs in Sokoto is the class structure--which incidentally is not unique to Sokoto, but a problem everywhere in Nigeria. There are only two classes of people in Sokoto, according to their own admission. There is the lower class and the upper class. The middle class is completely non-existent. This presents a particularly difficult problem because the lower class is constantly trying to destroy the upper class and the upper class is constantly trying to maintain their superiority by oppressing the lower class. Therefore, adult and continuing education classes that do exist, and there are very few, are created and maintained for the upper class--the "ruling class." The adult and continuing education programs that do exist on any scale are imported correspondence programs from England. These are poorly regulated, if at all, and are attended primarily by students who failed the secondary school "O" exam, which is patterned after the "ordinary school exam" in the English system.

In 1979 a Department of Extension Education was created at the University of Sokoto to promote formal adult and continuing education within the city of Sokoto and in some of the outlinning schools, but these accomplished little from their inception to 1980. The programs that were worked on were some nursing programs and literacy programs. The primary vehicle for promoting the literacy program was the Sokoto television station. This did not work well though and efforts diminished. The two basic problems that faced the administrators of the

literacy program was the fact most of the people in the area were illiterate and poor so could not understand the television programs even if they had a television to watch, and secondly, those that were literate enough to watch the programs and had a television to watch, had no use for such programs.

The programs offered at the University of Sokoto also did not take into account the many languages spoken in the area (one could walk five miles in almost any direction from the city's edge and encounter dozens of different languages) in its campaign for adult and continuing education nor approached key political and social figures in the area to promote adult education. Ignoring these there was little hope in establishing a program that appealed to the people. Part of the problem too, and a serious problem, was the fact the Department of Extension Education at the University of Sokoto was severely understaffed. So, regardless of the political and social problems in Sokoto, little could be done without sufficient staff. The staff that did work at the University were also not natives of Sokoto (most were expatriates) and therefore had no communicative channels with the people.

The attitudes of the local people toward the changes in education over the past several years was also a factor in their disinterest in adult and continuing education programs. The local people believed that because a greater percentage of children could now attend school, the educational system was less valuable and would not allow them to become part of the

upper class--assuming they could become part of it anyway if they were not already part of it. This is interesting but consistent with their experiences with the English school system where only the brightest were allowed to attend school and eventually graduate from the university, thus allowing them a chance at becoming part of the upper class or being able to participate in some of the benefits of the upper class. Thus, education had less value and therefore no immediate or long range value for them.

Probably the most dangerous condition preventing the creation and establishment of formal adult and continuing education programs, and for that matter elementary and secondary school programs in Sokoto, and in probably most of the other states in Nigeria, is the totalitarian way of administering the country's educational programs. There are many "living" and "non-living" example of this in the city of Sokoto and around the state. One "non-living" example is a vocational secondary school that exists on paper at the federal and state level, but does not exist physically 1 mile north of the city of Sokoto where it is suppose to exist. This vocational secondary school has approximately 200 students on paper but not one student in reality. There are dozens of schools that "exist" in the state of Sokoto like this. Politically, a school must exist on paper in order for a state ministry to obtain funds to support it. Thus, the appropriate number of schools are "created" to gain the necessary funds,

and then the school is never built. The funds are distributed among the officials involved and the children suffer. It is this totalitarian or perhaps "autocratic" way of thinking and doing things that has equally hindered the creation and establishment of adult and continuing education programs. Once these problems are solved Sokoto should progress educationally as well as the Southern states. With the efforts of conscientious educators, even though there are few, this is clearly a possibility.

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